Renegade Press PRESENTS

WORDSMITH

2.00 IN U.S.
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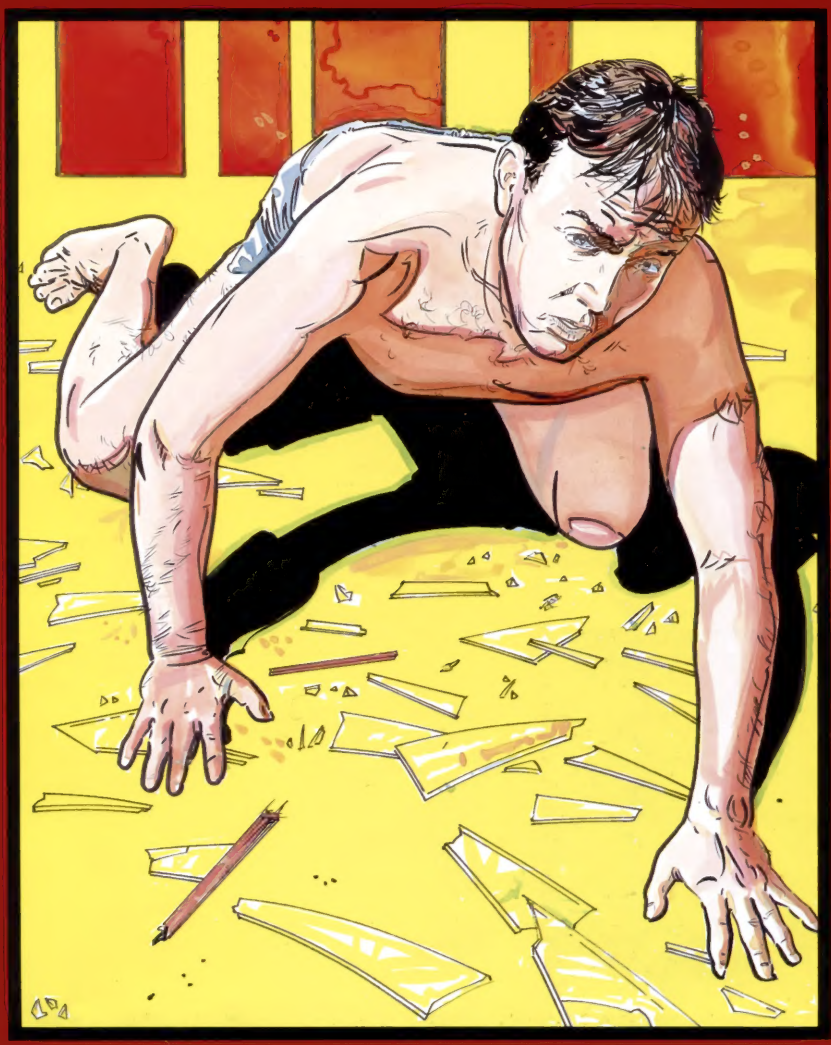

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

You've seen it in The Comic Buyer's Guide, you've read about it in various "fan" publications, and you've probably discussed it with some of your friends. I'm talking about a conspiracy here, people, and it's called CENSORSHIP. It is a conspiracy to take away some of our basic rights, such as the right to think and write as we see fit as fellow human beings! **The right to create.**

This is not a new thing. It has been fought on many levels in the entertainment industry for years. Books have been banned, and writers and artists have had terms dictated to them before. The difference, for you, the reader is that this time they are attacking something near and dear to us...comic books.

We have complained, both creators and readers, for the last ten years that comics are not taken seriously enough, that our own personal cultural heroes are going unrecognized by the "world outside". Well, guess what, folks; they have noticed, and the result isn't quite what all of us had in mind! Suddenly we are no longer producers and consumers of "third-rate children's literature". Suddenly **we** are producers (and consumers) of "pornography".

What to do about this new perception of our medium is up to each of us. For creators in the field, it may mean making a stand about their rights as individuals. Producing comics is, after all, how they make their living. It is also their forum to state their opinions. I think that enough has been said about that. We all know where the Frank Millers and the Chris Claremonts stand regarding the First Amendment. My question is, where do **you** stand?

You have spent the last ten years telling the creators, and the publishers, that you were ready for more adult themes in your reading. You told the artists and writers We listened to you tell us how you were all grown up and could appreciate something besides basic fistfights...you wanted something more. So we gave it to you. Retailers were told that, with an older reading audience, they could attract buyers who had more money to spend And we were right, as the growth of the market proves. All we ask in return now is that you support us when we want to do something more. There are people in the field putting their livelihood on the line, and all I ask is that you use your judgement in what you support.

There are people starving in Africa, and there are workers fighting for better working conditions in America. There are Blacks fighting for the right to live in equality in South Africa. When your support was asked for to aid these important causes, I'll bet you gave it. This kind of support simply takes a little more of your time and a different kind of sacrifice. These are your cultural heroes at risk here, and this is your fight as well as ours.

Ten years ago we were told not to make waves about little things like the rights of a creator to own his own creation. Some stayed and fought the battle in the Corporate offices, and others took off and formed their own places to create. Places where the artists could control their own creations. We thought we had that battle won but it sometimes seems like it **never** ends. Now the battle continues with forces from outside the field. We fought to create an industry where the artists could continue to grow, and instead we are finding the basic rights of our artists to speak out being questioned anew. The question of who is behind this is an editorial in itself, and not really important here. But what we can do about it **is!** a question that is being addressed to each one of you. You, our readers, can give the creators the protection they need, by simply being an informed consumer.

When you walk into your local comic shop, don't just buy whatever catches your eye. (Didn't you boycott grapes during the strike? I'm sure that didn't change the fact you liked them.) Support these artists who are taking a stand, and listen to what they are saying. This is still a small enough industry that what **you** do matters. You asked for the kind of work that only comes with true creative freedom. There is whether you have the same integrity that the writers and artists you so admire have shown. Or are fans just all talk and no action?

Here is a chance for you to prove where you stand. Every time a book is produced that pushes the boundaries of what is "acceptable", retailers and distributors are left vulnerable to the whims of their local authorities. They car be arrested, have their shops closed down, or fall victim to any number of other ways of legally harrassing them They can be forced to cooperate with the censoring of comics, simply **because** they cannot afford the price of refusal. And what's saddest is, they may not even know they have a choice.

Even now, a group of concerned artists is meeting to discuss the fine points of putting togeather what is, in essence, a "protest book" designed to raise funds and raise the consciousness of the retailers, distributors, and you, our reader. The money raised would go towards a fund which would help pay for any legal costs incurred by a publisher, artist, retailer or distributor as the result of any actions taken by them for protection against censorship and control by outside forces. This fund would help support the people who are on the front lines. I'm not going to say yet who will be working on the book. The issue goes beyond that. I'm challenging you, our readers, to put your power behind this and support this project. Write and tell all the publishers that you have heard about this project. Write to your local comic shop and tell them you will support this book. If you own a shop by all means read this book. Keep yourself informed. Get yourself involved. The time has come for you to do something. The time has come to use your power.

Deni

WORDSMITH

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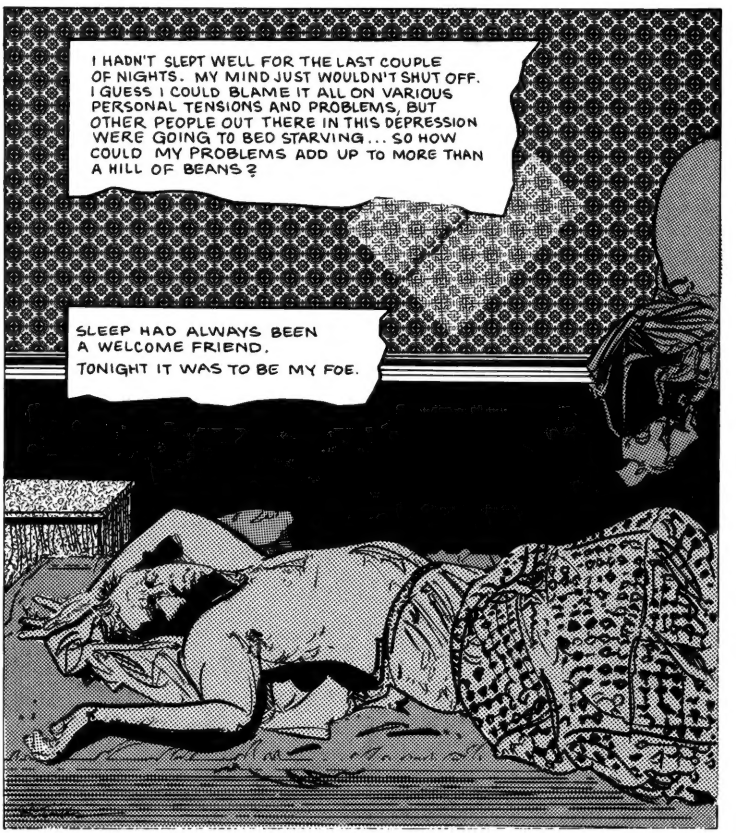
ROMANCE & REAL PEOPLE

story · DAVID DARRIGO


I HADN'T SLEPT WELL FOR THE LAST COUPLE OF NIGHTS. MY MIND JUST WOULDN'T SHUT OFF. I GUESS I COULD BLAME IT ALL ON VARIOUS PERSONAL TENSIONS AND PROBLEMS, BUT OTHER PEOPLE OUT THERE IN THIS DEPRESSION WERE GOING TO BED STARVING... SO HOW COULD MY PROBLEMS ADD UP TO MORE THAN A HILL OF BEANS?
SLEEP HAD ALWAYS BEEN A WELCOME FRIEND.
TONIGHT IT WAS TO BE MY FOE.

VOICES. TOO MANY VOICES.
"I WISH I COULD BREAK OUT OF THE DIME-NOVEL RUT."
"WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE WAY PEOPLE LIVE? YOU SIT IN A ROOM AND PUT STUPID WORDS ON PAPER!"
"SO, ARE YOU ANOTHER ONE OF THESE PENNY-A-WORD MERCENARIES?"
"BUT I SEE NOW THAT I COULD NEVER FACE MY PARENTS AND TELL THEM MY HUSBAND WRITES WORSE FAIRY TALES THAN MOTHER GOOSE!"

THE VOICES STOPPED AFTER I LANDED. BUT WHERE WAS I ?
I HEARD THE SOUNDS OF A CIRCUS. THE SOUNDS
WERE DISTANT, AS IF THEY WERE OUTSIDE, AND I WAS INSIDE.
INSIDE WHAT ? EVERYTHING WAS VAGUE. I COULDN'T
SEE THE SIDES OF THE TENT - BUT I KNEW IT WAS THERE.

EYES WERE UPON ME. I FELT THEM. BUT I COULDN'T SEE ANYBODY. EVERYTHING WAS FOGGY AND DIM. I WAS AFRAID TO MOVE. MY FIRST INSTINCT WAS TO RUN AND HIDE. BUT I FOUGHT THAT URGE.

I WAS APPREHENSIVE-YET CURIOUS. SOMETHING LAY AHEAD FOR ME. I KNEW IT. BUT I HAD TO MUSTER THE COURAGE TO FACE IT. IT WAS AS IF SOME INNER VOICE OF MY OWN WAS SAYING, "YOU WON'T SEE IT UNLESS YOU RESOLVE TO STAND AND FACE IT LIKE A MAN."

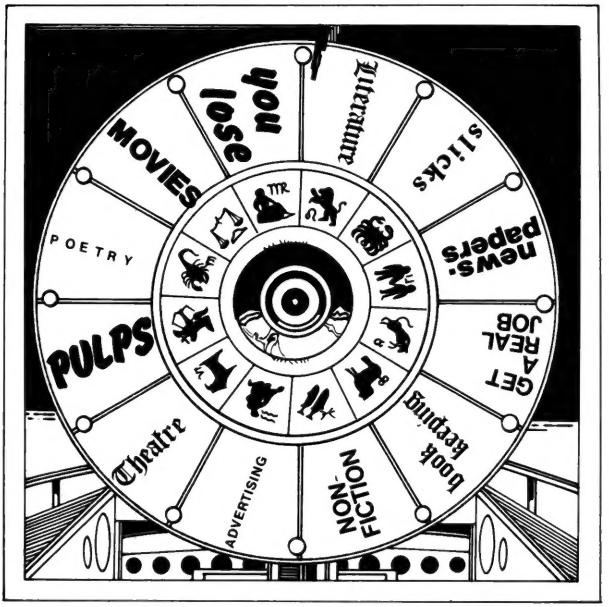
AND SO I STOOD BRAVELY AND WAITED. ALL OF MY PULP HEROES WOULD HAVE BEEN PROUD OF ME. "THAT'S THE SPIRIT!" THEY WOULD HAVE SHOUTED.

THEN HE APPEARED. HE CALLED OUT TO ME.

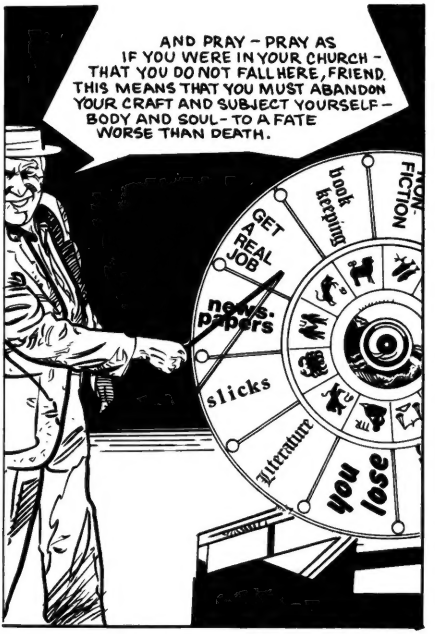
YOU THERE! YES, YOU. CARE TO PLAY A GAME OF CHANCE?

MOVIES
POETRY
PULPS
lose
NOW
ELECTRONICS
STARS
NEWS-papers

IT'S A GAME FOR PEOPLE LIKE YOU. IT'S A LITTLE WORD GAME FOR WRITERS. WORDS MEAN EVERYTHING TO YOU, DON'T THEY? YOU LOVE THEM LIKE A MOTHER DOES A NEW-BORN CHILD. BUT YOU WANT TO CONTROL THEM, RIGHT? YOU WANT TO BRING THEM FORTH INTO THE WORLD AND DIRECT THEM TO WHERE THEY DO THE MOST GOOD, RIGHT? WELL, TONIGHT WE'LL SEE THE WORDS CONTROL YOU! TONIGHT THE WORDS ARE GOING TO TELL YOU WHERE THEY WANT TO BE DIRECTED. COME CLOSER, FRIEND. TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR WHEEL OF FORTUNE.


you lose
Literature
slicks
news-papers
GET A REAL JOB
book keeping
NON-FICTION
ADVERTISING
Theatre
PULPS
POETRY
MOVIES

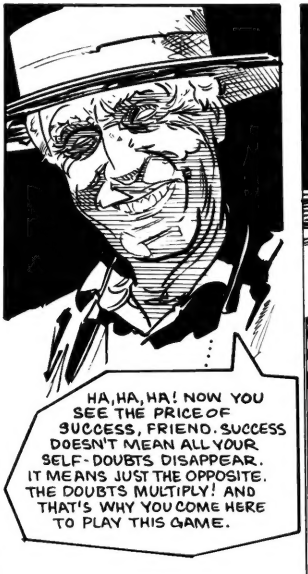
I'LL SPIN THE WHEEL AND IT WILL DECIDE YOUR FATE. BUT BEWARE THESE TWO WORDS. THIS MEANS THAT YOU MUST KEEP PLAYING THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE EVERY DAY...FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE!!
slicks
Literature
you lose
MOVIES
POETRY

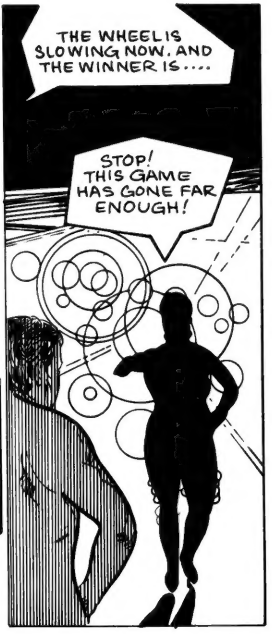

AND PRAY - PRAY AS IF YOU WERE IN YOUR CHURCH - THAT YOU DO NOT FALL HERE, FRIEND. THIS MEANS THAT YOU MUST ABANDON YOUR CRAFT AND SUBJECT YOURSELF - BODY AND SOUL - TO A FATE WORSE THAN DEATH.
NON-FICTION
book keeping
GET A REAL JOB
news-papers
slicks
Literature
you lose

ARE YOU READY TO PLAY? YOU ARE? GOOD! THEN LET'S START THE WHEEL TURNING. THERE IT GOES. ROUND AND ROUND. WHERE IT STOPS - NOBODY KNOWS.

ROUND AND ROUND.
WHERE IT STOPS - NOBODY KNOWS.
NOBODY KNOWS.
NOBODY KNOWS.
NOBODY KNOWS!
HA, HA, HA, HA, HA!
GET A REAL JOB
keeping
news-papers
slicks

MY HANDS NERVOUSLY COVERED MY FACE.
OH, GOD! WHY AM I DOING THIS? WHY CAN'T I BE HAPPY WRITING THESE PULP STORIES? IT'S HONEST WORK. ENTERTAINING PEOPLE ISN'T A CRIME.


HA, HA, HA! NOW YOU SEE THE PRICE OF SUCCESS, FRIEND. SUCCESS DOESN'T MEAN ALL YOUR SELF-DOUBTS DISAPPEAR. IT MEANS JUST THE OPPOSITE. THE DOUBTS MULTIPLY! AND THAT'S WHY YOU COME HERE TO PLAY THIS GAME.

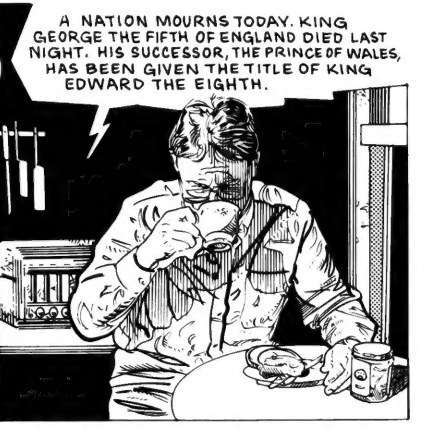

THE WHEEL IS SLOWING NOW. AND THE WINNER IS....
STOP! THIS GAME HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH!

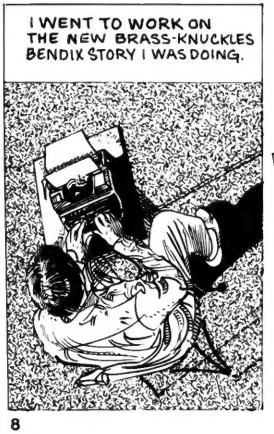
IT WAS CLARISSA MIDDLETON, MY GIRLFRIEND. AND STANDING BEHIND HER WAS THE EVIL SOLAR LENS WEAPON FROM ONE OF MY STORIES.
THIS IS MADNESS, CLAY WASHBURN!
I'VE ALREADY TOLD YOU TO USE YOUR WORDS TO ENRICH PEOPLE'S LIVES - NOT ENTERTAIN THEM WITH RIDICULOUS FANTASIES. I'VE TOLD YOU THIS MANY TIMES. BUT YOU WON'T LISTEN TO ME. YOU DARE TO FACE MY SCORN...
...NOW YOU MUST FACE MY FURY!
THE HEAT FROM THE LENS WAS BURNING ME UP.
I WAS GOING UP IN FLAMES...
...LIKE THE VERY FIRES OF HELL ITSELF!

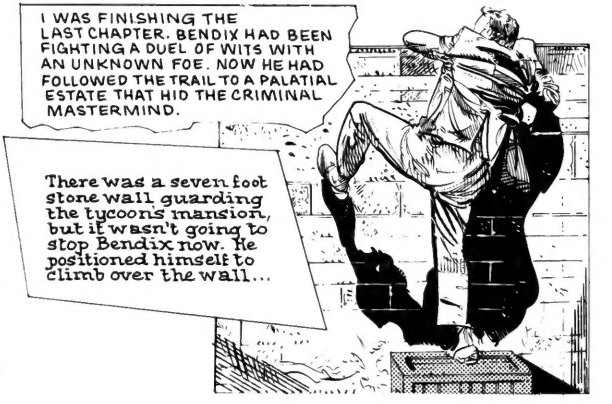
THEN I WOKE UP.
OH, BROTHER! WHAT A DREAM!

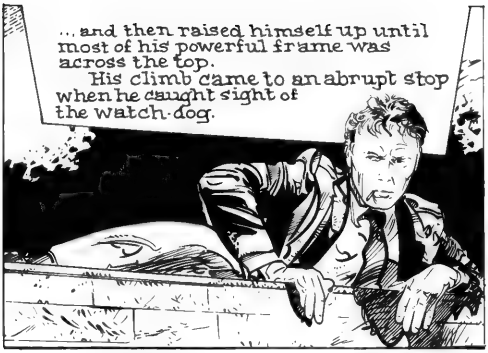
UNNGH! OH, WELL. ANOTHER DAY...
... ANOTHER DOLLAR.

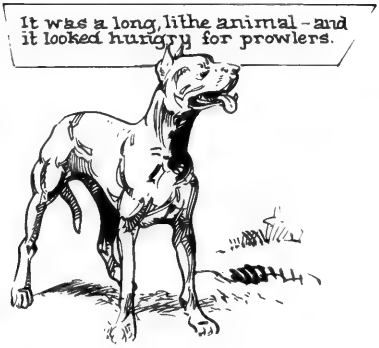
THAT WASN'T A DREAM; IT WAS A NIGHTMARE! THAT'S THE FIRST NIGHTMARE I'VE HAD IN A LONG TIME. MAYBE I SHOULD READ MORE ABOUT PSYCHO-ANALYSIS. THIS GUY FREUD MIGHT HAVE SOMETHING WORTHWHILE AFTERALL.

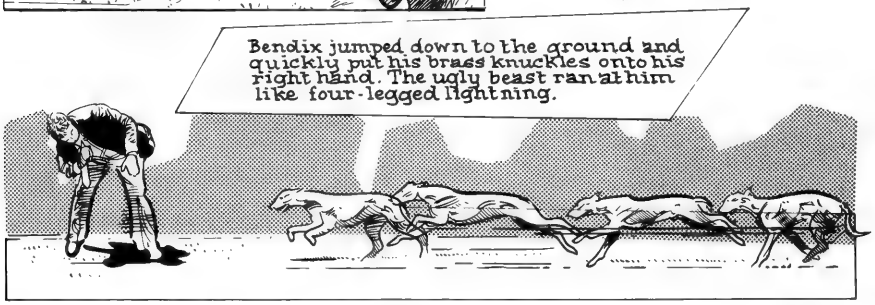

A NATION MOURNS TODAY. KING GEORGE THE FIFTH OF ENGLAND DIED LAST NIGHT. HIS SUCCESSOR, THE PRINCE OF WALES, HAS BEEN GIVEN THE TITLE OF KING EDWARD THE EIGHTH.

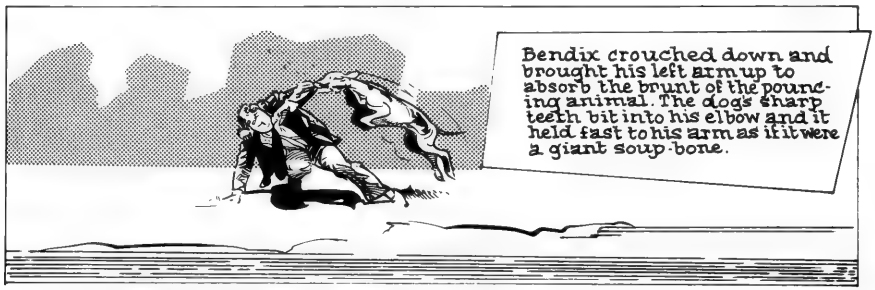

I WENT TO WORK ON THE NEW BRASS-KNUCKLES BENDIX STORY I WAS DOING.


I WAS FINISHING THE LAST CHAPTER. BENDIX HAD BEEN FIGHTING A DUEL OF WITS WITH AN UNKNOWN FOE. NOW HE HAD FOLLOWED THE TRAIL TO A PALATIAL ESTATE THAT HID THE CRIMINAL MASTERMIND.
There was a seven foot stone wall guarding the tycoons mansion, but it wasn't going to stop Bendix now. He positioned himself to climb over the wall...


... and then raised himself up until most of his powerful frame was across the top.
His climb came to an abrupt stop when he caught sight of the watch-dog.




Bendix jumped down to the ground and quickly put his brass knuckles onto his right hand. The ugly beast ran at him like four-legged lightning.


Bendix crouched down and brought his left arm up to absorb the brunt of the pouncing animal. The dog's sharp teeth bit into his elbow and it held fast to his arm as if it were a giant soup-bone.

Bendix let the dog keep its painful hold on his arm as he wrestled it to the ground. Then he raised his knucks and aimed them at the side of the beast's head.

He killed the animal with one solid brass-knuckled blow.

Breathing hard and wincing with pain, Bendix barely had time to recover from the first attack when a new threat appeared.

The man wore work clothes and held a garden hoe for his weapon. He seemed to be the tycoon's gardener.

"Hey! You can't come in here!" the man called. "Get out! Right now!"

Bendix didn't want to fight him. He tried to ignore him.

Bendix saw the gardener move in close to do battle. The burly man was going to protect his boss and avenge the death of the watch-dog.

Bendix waited until the man had started to swipe at him with the hoe before he moved to defend himself. He dodged the metal blade once, twice - three times.

Impatiently Bendix grabbed hold of the hoe and a brief tug-of-war ensued. Bendix hoped to disarm the burly man and continue on his way into the house, but the gardener was strong and stubborn.

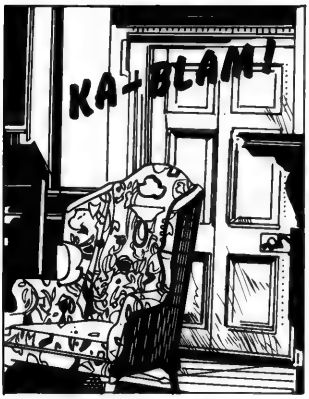
Bendix was still wearing his brass-knuckles. He used them to end the struggle by bringing his right fist down on the hands where one of the gardener's hands held the hoe.

The man screamed as Bendix's brass-knuckles cracked a couple of the gardener's bare knuckles. He let loose his grip on the hoe and bent over in pain.

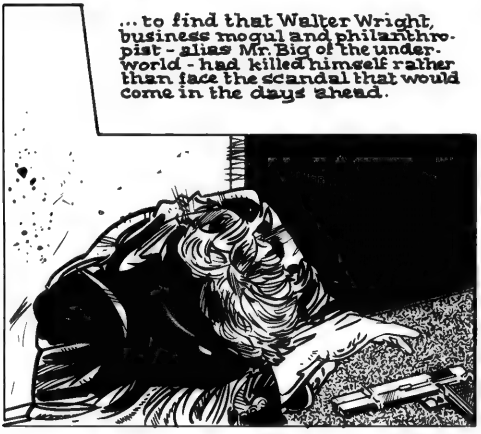
Bendix raised the hoe and threw it over the stone wall.

Bendix heard the sirens of the police cars as he approached the front door of the mansion. His phone message to detective Chuck Webster had got through and now the police dragnet was closing in on the mysterious Mr. Big.

The inside of the mansion was deserted. Bendix observed all the expensive rugs and paintings, the huge chandelier and the classic furniture, but he didn't stop to admire it. He ran to the door of the study and tried to open it, but it was locked from inside. He began pounding on the thick door with his brass-knuckles.


KA-BLAM!

There was a single shot from inside the room. Bendix kicked in the door...


... to find that Walter Wright, business mogul and philanthropist - alias Mr. Big of the underworld - had killed himself rather than face the scandal that would come in the days ahead.

"We can't have this in my house!" the woman screamed. "We can't have this in my house!"

Bendix watched Mrs Wright enter the room and go to her husband's side. The distraught woman touched the bloody corpse and said, "Why? Why did he do it?"

"That's a good question, lady," Bendix softly muttered.
Chuck Webster and his men marched into the room. "We're all too late," Bendix said.
Brrinqq!!

IT WAS CLARISSA.
HELLO, CLAY. I DIDN'T HEAR FROM YOU OVER THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS. HAVE YOU BEEN BUSY WRITING?
NO. I WAS HELPING OUT JOE THE NEWSSTAND VENDOR. HIS WIFE WAS SICK, SO I RAN HIS STAND FOR HIM WHILE HE TENDED TO HER.
YOU MEAN YOU ACTUALLY STOOD OUT IN THE COLD ALL DAY AND SOLD NEWSPAPERS? OH, CLAY. THAT'S THE SILLIEST THING I'VE EVER HEARD.
HE'S MY FRIEND, CLARISSA.
WOULDN'T YOU GO OUT ON A LIMB TO HELP A FRIEND?
OH, I SUPPOSE SO.
UH... ARE YOU FREE FOR A DATE THIS WEEKEND?
NO, I'M SORRY. WE'RE HAVING A BIG DEBUTANTE BALL HERE AT THE HOUSE ON SATURDAY. IT'S FOR MY SISTER, VANESSA.
MOMENTS LATER I ABRUPTLY SAID GOOD-BYE AND HUNG UP - THEN IT OCCURRED TO ME —
WAS SHE CALLING TO INVITE ME TO THE PARTY?
THE NEXT DAY, WHEN I WAS VISITING SAM KAISER AT THE OFFICES OF ROYAL PUBLICATIONS.
HOW ABOUT LUNCH, CLAY?
SURE, UH, IS THIS BUSINESS OR PLEASURE?
THE COMPANY WILL PICK UP THE BILL...
coffee shop
coffee shop
BUT DON'T EXPECT DELMONICO'S.

INSIDE THE DINER WE PASSED BY DAISY HURD, THE EDITOR OF ROYAL'S ROMANCE PULPS. SHE WAS SITTING ALONE.
HI, DAISY.
HELLO, CLAY. NICE TO SEE YOU.

SAM SOON GOT DOWN TO BUSINESS.
THE PUBLISHER JUST GOT THE YEAR-END SALES FIGURES FOR CRIME SMASHERS MAGAZINE.
GOOD FIGURES, I HOPE.

VERY GOOD. HE AND I NOTICED THAT THERE WAS A RISE IN SALES EVERY MONTH THAT WE RAN ONE OF YOUR BRASS-KNUCKLES BENDIX STORIES. SO - IF YOU'RE UP TO IT - WE'D LIKE TO USE THE BENDIX STORIES AS A MAIN FEATURE. EVERY MONTH.
GREAT. I'M UP TO IT.

OKAY. JUST REMEMBER ONE THING - AFTER THAT DOMINO DETECTIVE PROBLEM WE HAD WITH YOU, I HAD TO PERSONALLY VOUCH FOR YOUR PROFESSIONALISM. WE CAN'T HAVE THAT HAPPEN AGAIN.

I'M SORRY WE HAD THAT PROBLEM. BUT I STAND BY WHAT I DID. I KNOW YOU THINK I WAS BEING STUBBORN - BUT THERE WAS MORE TO IT THAN MEETS THE EYE.

DAISY STOPPED ME ON THE WAY OUT.
CLAY —
YES?
SIT DOWN. LET'S HAVE A CHAT.

WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO DO ANOTHER 'CUPID CAROL' STORY FOR ME? I'VE RECEIVED A LOT OF MAIL OVER THAT CHARACTER.
I'M WILLING TO PAY YOU TOP RATES.
SORRY, DAISY. I JUST HAVE A HARD TIME DOING ROMANCE STORIES.
ESPECIALLY WHEN I'VE GOT REAL-LIFE ROMANCE PROBLEMS OF MY OWN.
OH, THAT'S A SHAME. CAN I OFFER ANY ADVICE?
I'D RATHER NOT TALK ABOUT IT.
I JUST WISH THAT OUR LOVE LIVES COULD BE AS SIMPLE AS THEY ARE IN YOUR MAGAZINES.
BUT REAL PEOPLE ARE FAR MORE COMPLICATED THAN ANY ROMANCE STORY COULD EVER PORTRAY THEM.
LATER I WENT OVER TO CENTRAL PARK.
I SAT DOWN AND PONDERED THE ADVICE DAISY HAD MANAGED TO SHOE-HORN INTO MY BRAIN.
Used Books
"THINK POSITIVE," SHE HAD SAID. "THINK ABOUT THE GOOD TIMES YOU'VE SHARED. I'M SURE THAT THESE THOUGHTS WILL HELP YOU THROUGH THE BAD TIMES."

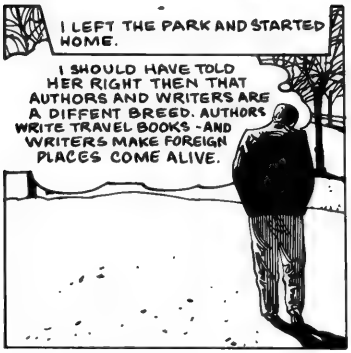
MY THOUGHTS WENT BACK TO THE FIRST DAY I MET CLARISSA. IT WAS IN A USED BOOK SHOP. I WAS LOOKING FOR REFERENCE MATERIAL. SHE WAS THERE LOOKING FOR TRAVEL BOOKS. WE HAD BOTH BEEN REACHING FOR A BOOK ABOUT AFRICA, WHEN OUR HANDS ACCIDENTALLY TOUCHED.

WE STARTED TALKING. SHE QUICKLY FOUND OUT ABOUT MY WRITING.

"OH, SO YOU'RE AN AUTHOR?" SHE SAID. EVEN AT THAT TIME I WANTED TO BREAK HER HAUGHTY PRETENSIONS AND TELL HER - "NO. I'M A WRITER."

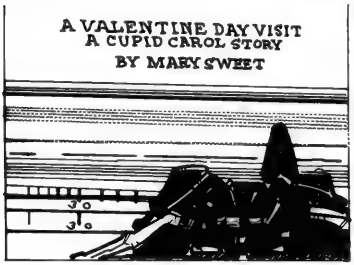
I LEFT THE PARK AND STARTED HOME.

I SHOULD HAVE TOLD HER RIGHT THEN THAT AUTHORS AND WRITERS ARE A DIFFENT BREED. AUTHORS WRITE TRAVEL BOOKS - AND WRITERS MAKE FOREIGN PLACES COME ALIVE.



DAISY'S ADVICE - AND HER OFFER FOR TOP RATES - HAD GOT ME THINKING ABOUT A NEW ROMANCE STORY. THESE STORIES WERE TOUGH FOR ME TO DO - BUT I TOOK THEM AS A CHALLENGE TO PROVE TO MYSELF THAT I COULD WRITE FOR ANY MARKET.

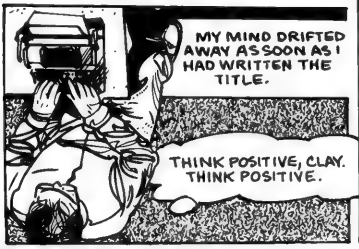
A VALENTINE DAY VISIT
A CUPID CAROL STORY
BY MARY SWEET



I REMEMBERED THE FIRST TIME CLARISSA HAD INVITED ME TO HER HOME TO MEET HER HIGH SOCIETY PARENTS. THIS HAPPENED ABOUT TWO YEARS AFTER THE '29 CRASH. THE COUNTRY WAS IN A BAD WAY. BUT THE MIDDLETON MANSION SEEMED IMMUNE TO IT ALL - AS IF IT WERE A TANK IN AN ARTILLERY BARRAGE.

MY MIND DRIFTED AWAY AS SOON AS I HAD WRITTEN THE TITLE.

THINK POSITIVE, CLAY. THINK POSITIVE.



I WAS NERVOUS, BUT NOT IN AWE. I THINK THEY SENSED IT - AND IT DIDN'T SIT WELL WITH THEM.
HELLO, MY BOY. WELCOME TO OUR HUMBLE ABODE. HEH, HEH, HEH.

IT DIDN'T SURPRISE MOTHER AND I WHEN WE HEARD CLARISSA WAS DATING A WRITER. OUR DAUGHTER HAS LITERARY ASPIRATIONS OF HER OWN, DON'T YOU KNOW.
OH, REALLY?

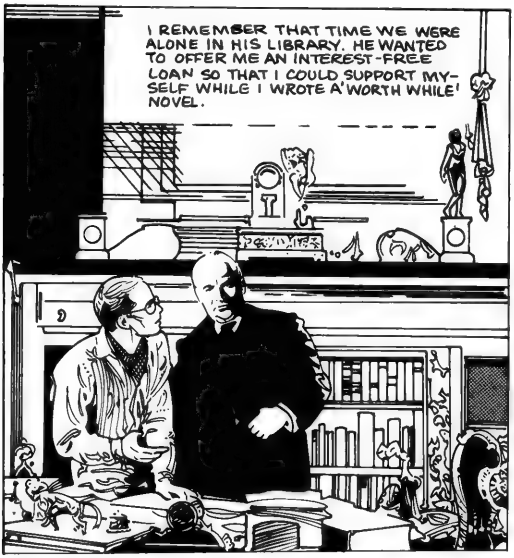
YES, SHE'S HAD THAT DEAR LITTLE NOSE OF HERS BURIED IN BOOKS EVER SINCE HER CHILDHOOD.
OH, DADDY.

LATER, WE TOURED THE ESTATE

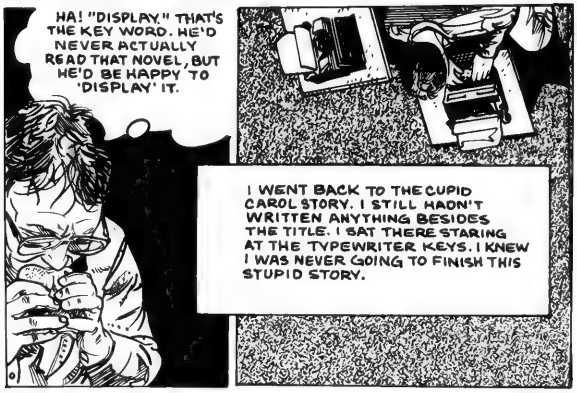
WE SAT AND READ LOVE POEMS. CLARISSA HAD CHOSEN A SHAKESPEARIAN SONNET FOR MY VISIT.
"MY TONGUE-TIED MUSE IN MANNERS HOLDS HER STILL, WHILE COMMENTS OF YOUR PRAISE, RICHLY COMPIL'D RESERVE THEIR CHARACTERS WITH GOLDEN QUILL AND PRECIOUS PHRASE BY ALL THE MUSES FIL'D. I THINK GOOD THOUGHTS WHILE OTHERS WRITE GOOD WORDS,

AND LIKE UNLETTERED CLERK, STILL CRY 'AMEN' TO EVERY HYMN THAT ABLE SPIRIT AFFORDS IN POLISH'D FORM OF WELL-REFINED PEN.

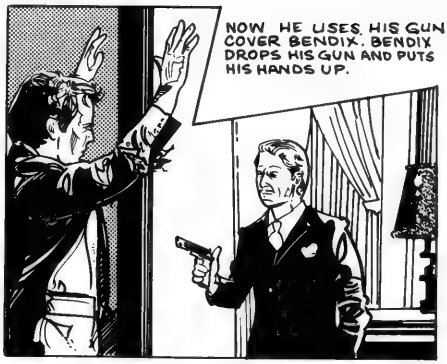
YEAH, THOSE WERE GOOD TIMES. CLARISSA HAD ALL THE RESPECT IN THE WORLD FOR ME. HER PARENTS DIDN'T LIKE ME, BUT SHE WOULD HAVE DEFENDED ME TO THEM WITH ALL THE SKILL OF A CLARENCE DARROW.
SHE HAD 'CAUGHT' AN AUTHOR. SHE LIKED TO SHOW ME OFF TO HER FRIENDS.
I DIDN'T LIKE HER FRIENDS. AND SHE CERTAINLY DIDN'T LIKE MINE. I REMEMBER THAT TIME SHE MET JOE THE PUG.
SHE WAS GETTING SUSPICIOUS OF ME. I HAD TOLD HER THAT I WROTE FOR A LIVING, BUT I HAD NEVER SHOWN HER MY WORK. SO ONE DAY I DECIDED TO REVEAL THE TRUTH TO HER.
AFTERNOON, CLAY. AFTERNOON, MISS. I READ YOUR NEW TOMBSTONE TUNNEY STORY LAST NIGHT, CLAY. IT WAS GREAT! I GOT GOOSE-BUMPS WHEN HE WAS FIGHTING THAT DUEL WITH SPUR DUFF. KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
UH, THANKS, JOE.
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WRITING FOR THESE MAGAZINES?
OH, ABOUT A YEAR.
THEY ARE REALLY QUITE GAUDY AND... JUVENILE, DON'T YOU THINK?
OH, I DON'T KNOW. THEY HAVE AN INNOCENT CHARM THAT APPEALS TO ME. I GUESS I'M JUST A SUCKER FOR GOOD-AGAINST-EVIL YARNS.

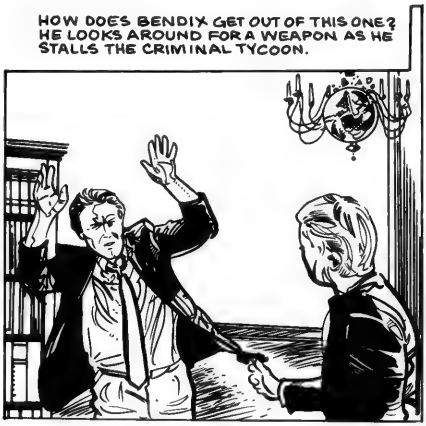

I REMEMBER THAT TIME WE WERE ALONE IN HIS LIBRARY. HE WANTED TO OFFER ME AN INTEREST-FREE LOAN SO THAT I COULD SUPPORT MYSELF WHILE I WROTE A 'WORTH WHILE' NOVEL.

HE WAS VERY UNCOMFORTABLE THAT DAY. I KNEW THAT CLARISSA HAD PUT HIM UP TO THIS OFFER. "LISTEN, MY BOY. I WANT YOU TO PRODUCE A WORK OF ART THAT I WOULD BE PROUD TO DISPLAY HERE IN MY LIBRARY," HE SAID.


HA! "DISPLAY." THAT'S THE KEY WORD. HE'D NEVER ACTUALLY READ THAT NOVEL, BUT HE'D BE HAPPY TO 'DISPLAY' IT.
I WENT BACK TO THE CUPID CAROL STORY. I STILL HADN'T WRITTEN ANYTHING BESIDES THE TITLE. I SAT THERE STARING AT THE TYPEWRITER KEYS. I KNEW I WAS NEVER GOING TO FINISH THIS STUPID STORY.

MY MIND HAD DRIFTED BACK TO THE ENDING OF THE BRASS-KNUCKLES STORY. IT BOTHERED ME THAT MR. BIG HAD SIMPLY KILLED HIMSELF. I WANTED SOMETHING ELSE. SOMETHING WITH PIZZAZZ.


NOW HE USES HIS GUN COVER BENDIX. BENDIX DROPS HIS GUN AND PUTS HIS HANDS UP.


HOW DOES BENDIX GET OUT OF THIS ONE? HE LOOKS AROUND FOR A WEAPON AS HE STALLS THE CRIMINAL TYCOON.

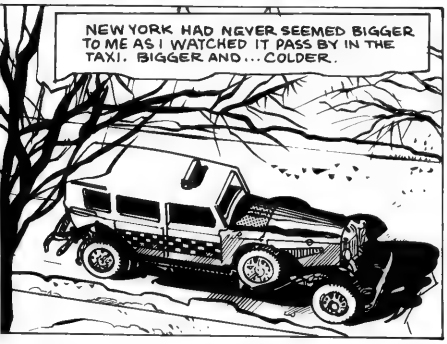
BOOKS! YEAH! BENDIX TOPPLES A BOOKCASE ONTO MR. BIG.

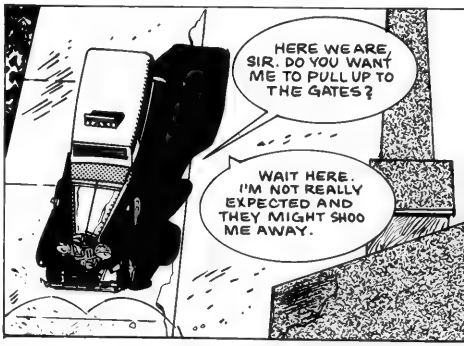
THE TYCOON HAD ALL THOSE BOOKS ON 'DISPLAY' AND NOW THEY HAD HELPED IN HIS CAPTURE.

BENDIX TIES HIM UP AND SAYS "YOU'LL HAVE PLENTY OF TIME TO READ WHERE YOU'RE GOIN', PAL."

THE WIFE STILL COMES IN AT THE END, SAYING, "WE CAN'T HAVE THIS IN MY HOUSE."

FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS MY THOUGHTS WERE ON THE DEBUTANTE BALL FOR CLARISSA'S SISTER. THEN ON SATURDAY EVENING —

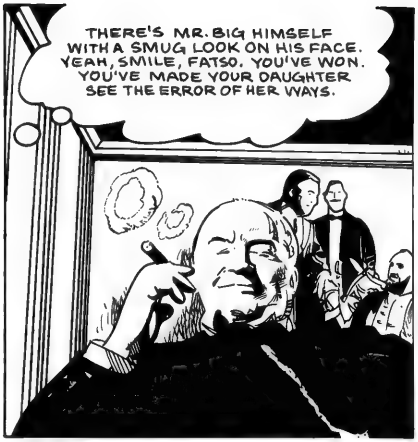




THE GUARD CAME OUT OF HIS GATEHOUSE TO TALK TO ME. I NOTICED THAT HE DIDN'T PUT ON HIS CAP, AS IF HE WAS EXPECTING TROUBLE FROM SOME GATE-CRASHER.

GO AHEAD, CLARISSA. TELL THE GUARD THAT I'M NOT WELCOMED. TELL HIM TO REMOVE ME FROM THE PREMISES. TELL HIM I'M JUST A DRIFTER . . . JUST A HOBO.
OKAY, SIR. THEY'VE TOLD ME YOU CAN GO IN.
THANKS.
I WALKED UP THE LONG DRIVEWAY—
—AND AS I APPROCHED THE HOUSE I COULD HEAR THE ORCHESTRA PLAYING INSIDE.
I STOPPED BEFORE I REACHED THE FRONT DOOR. ONE WINDOW STOOD OUT IN THE DARKNESS LIKE THE BEAM FROM A LIGHTHOUSE. I WAS MESMERIZED BY IT, AS IF IT WERE WARNING ME TO STEER AWAY FROM THE COASTAL ROCKS AND SHALLOWS.

NO-ONE SAW ME AS I LOOKED IN THROUGH THE WINDOW.


THERE'S MR. BIG HIMSELF WITH A SMUG LOOK ON HIS FACE. YEAH, SMILE, FATSO. YOU'VE WON. YOU'VE MADE YOUR DAUGHTER SEE THE ERROR OF HER WAYS.

THERE'S MRS. MIDDLETON CHEWING OUT THE MAID. "YOU'RE SLOPPY, MY DEAR. WE CAN'T HAVE THAT IN MY HOUSE."

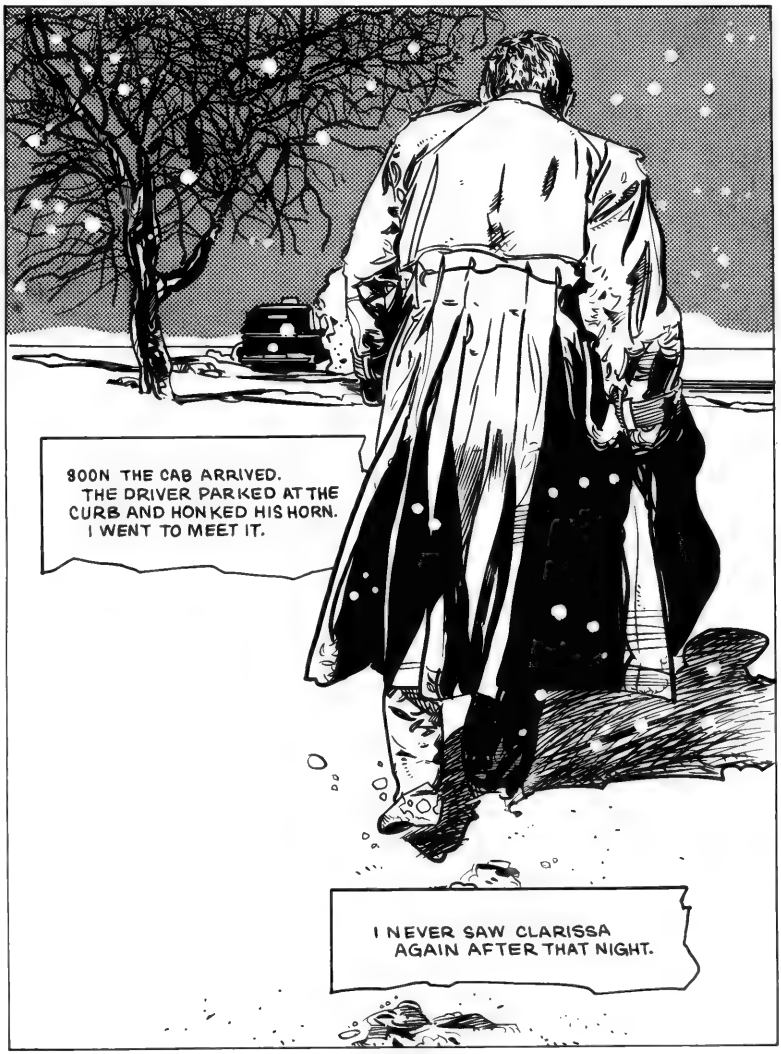
THERE'S CLARISSA DANCING WITH THAT YOUNG CAPTAIN OF INDUSTRY.
SHE LOOKS RADIANT TONIGHT

THEY NEVER WANTED ME IN THEIR LIVES.

I WAS NUTS TO THINK THAT THEY WOULD EVER ACCEPT ME.

BACK AT THE GATE —

THE GUARD HAD A SMALL RADIO BLARING IN HIS GATEHOUSE.
HE DIDN'T HEAR ME COME IN. HE SAT ENTHRALLED, READING A DETECTIVE PULP. IT WAS A COPY OF CRIME SMASHERS.
DO YOU LIKE BRASS-KNUCKLES BENDIX?
HUH? WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?
I KNOW THE GUY WHO WRITES THOSE BRASS KNUCKLES BENDIX STORIES.
SORRY. I SHOULD'VE KNOCKED.
OH, YEAH? TELL HIM I'M A BIG FAN OF HIS.
OKAY. I'LL DO THAT.
CAN YOU CALL ME A CAB? I WANT TO GO HOME. I DON'T FEEL WELL.
YES, SIR.


SOON THE CAB ARRIVED.
THE DRIVER PARKED AT THE CURB AND HONKED HIS HORN.
I WENT TO MEET IT.
I NEVER SAW CLARISSA AGAIN AFTER THAT NIGHT.

art· R.G. TAYLOR

letters· LES TAYLOR

THE END

LOGO BY RON HOBBS

PULP FEVER

Send Letters to: PULP FEVER, c/o Dragon Lady Comic Shop, 200 Queen St. W., Toronto, Ontario M5V 1Z2

RANDOM NOTES FROM DAVE

Welcome to another Pulp Fever. Last issue's Christmas story brought several very nice letters which, unfortunately, won't see print until Wordsmith #10 because of the 32 page story in #9. (Please keep in mind that Rick Taylor and myself don't always know how long a story will finish up — so it's possible that #10 will also be 32 pages.)

Before going into the letters I'd like thank William Brohaugh, editor of Writer's Digest, for the coverage he did on Wordsmith in the Nov. '86 issue. And thanks also go to Paul Power and David Kraft for the co-interview with myself and David Ross that saw print in Comics Interviews #39 and 40.

In Comics Interview 39 readers will see a photo of Ron Hobbs, and I would like to point out that Ron created our Pulp Fever logo, as well as the Pulp Portrait in Wordsmith #5. At this moment Ron and I are working on a project called 'The Snake' which is a very deliberate attempt to do an '80's version of The Shadow and the Spider. It will be out by the summer. Watch for it.

Also, I want to ask that our readers help support the Dan Jordan/Sky Soldier revival currently in motion. (See the promo in this issue). I'm sure that many of you are as curious as I was when I saw this promo in a recent pulp fanzine. In order to assuage this curiosity I'll reprint here a letter from Frank Lewandowski's NEMESIS INC. #23. The letter writer is Burt Leake and this is his 'thumbnail story' of the origins of Dan Jordan.

"Martin Willoughby, the author, first wrote these stories with the intent of placing them in a magazine which was to compete with Bill Barnes. The magazine was still-born so Willoughby boxed them up and put them away in his basement. He died a short time ago and his son took them, lock, stock and barrel to A.C. Anson — the publisher of AIR WARS magazine — asking only that they see the light of day at last — fifty years after they were written!"

One last note — Marshall Ossey (of 3370 Emerson, Skokie, Illinois, 60077) is hoping to get out a pulp magazine replica called PULP DREAM. He needs original material that tries to copy the vivid action style of the old pulps, but with updated settings. No Fantasy required. And harder Science-Fiction preferred. No word limit. Nominal payment of 5 to 10 dollars. He may edit your story "far beyond the author's imagination." Send a return envelope and adequate postage with each submission.

That's it for now. Let's go into the letters.

Dear Wordpeople,

Well, what the heck can I possibly say after Harlan Ellison. I mean, **Harlan Ellison** for God's sake!

High praise indeed. I can't match such eloquence, but I hope I can contribute some words that will be beneficial to Wordsmith's success.

As stated by another reader, Wordsmith, or Clay, is not a power fantasy like Spiderman or Superman. Clay doesn't escape responsibility but instead confronts it, as I have to — as **everyone** has to. Maybe Spiderman and Superman can vicariously allow us to pound our frustrations out on Green Goblins and Lex Luthors, but when the fantasy is over we have to return to the real world. The fantasy ends, but the problem still exists.

Clay's world is less of a fantasy because, like me, he has problems that must be confronted. I can identify better with Clay because he's vulnerable to such things as a punch in the mouth and the monthly bills. Unable to swing off on a thin strand of web fluid, Clay can't escape his problems, instead having to worry and sweat and pace around and decide on a solution that isn't a magic solution with no drawbacks. Sometimes the drawbacks are so great that the only satisfaction is in knowing he made a decision and stood by it. Clay is a greater hero because he **faces** his problems, and even when he loses, he still has his integrity. That's what I like about Wordsmith.

Dave Berkebile, Boca Raton, Florida

Bang! That was the sound of the hammer hitting the nail squarely on the head.

You were far more eloquent than you thought, Dave. You've responded, like all our faithful readers, to the idea that Clay can be a hero. He doesn't have powers, he doesn't carry a gun, he doesn't have an adventurous job; he's rooted in real time (not a fantasy world) and he's not caught up in a war — yet he's a hero. He does have to fight — his own everyday self-doubts — and he does have an uncommon ability — the ability to give to Life as much as he takes from it.

Dear Dave and R.G.,

In #5 Clay seems to be very prophetic about the nature and threat of the Nazis. (Of course, I don't know the exact year in which the story is set, and the closer it is to 1939 the less prophetic he is — though not by as much as one might think.) Prior to the war people really weren't all that concerned about Hitler and Naziism. Sure, he seemed a bit of an odd bird, but he had gotten Germany back on its feet again and he was a staunch anti-communist. "Mein Kempf?" Well, that was written over a decade ago when he was killing time in prison — probably in a bad mood, too. Besides, who'd believe he'd

actually try and accomplish the crazy things he said in there? And if he did, the German people and government wouldn't let him. He's only an ex-corporal, after all, I mean, we just have to live with the guy — we don't have to love him.

Actually, very few people spoke out against Hitler and the Nazi threat before the war, even outside of Germany. One of the few strong voices of warning was that of Winston Churchill. And, in a way, that hurt the anti-Nazi cause since Churchill had been utterly disgraced during World War One (Gallipoli, etc.) and was not accorded much respect.

So, while it's clearly possible that Clay would see the Nazi threat so clearly and quickly, it was not all that common. We should be careful about assigning "retroactively correct" attitudes to characters in the past. (Though, to give you credit, you portrayed Clay as repelled by the Nazi philosophy — not also fearful of their military posture and imminent threat to peace.)

Eric Hassel was correct about one thing — the superman **is** celebrated in many pulps (and in many comics, and indeed in much of modern literature). Of course, there is a vast difference between a superman who helps the common man and defends a belief in equality and justice, and one who uses his powers to dominate and subjugate those who are weaker, or not in the 'correct' group. However, we must still be careful when portraying the 'ideal' superman, lest we become deluded into believing that the ideal is the only worthy condition, or that such people have an inherent right to superiority (even if they do not exercise it).

I must say that if I had been duped into writing a whole story for nothing, I don't think I would have taken it as well as Clay did — or come around so rapidly, at least. (Of course, I guess Clay can use the story later by changing around a few minor details.)

On the one hand, I guess it **is** a good lesson not to take yourself too seriously. But on the other hand, in Naziism, Clay had found one of the issues which should have been taken **supremely** seriously. Think what might have happened if more people had not stuffed it off in the '30's.

T.M. Maple, Weston, Ontario

Well, T.M., you force me into a long reply, so I hope other readers will find some interest in the following monologue.

I understand your warning about fictional characters being 'retroactively correct' and, although you don't directly accuse me of making Clay 'correct' you still seem to be pointing the finger in my direction.

Let's face it — due to space limitations, the constraints of the medium and, yes, even the skills of the creators' it's a fact that some stories are left wide open to a variety of interpretations. Especially when there is a lot of space left for the reader 'between the lines'.

Now, if I may, a brief history lesson.

Hitler took power in 1933. He immediately throttled his opposition. Communists and anti-Nazi intellectuals (especially if they were also Jewish) were rounded up into detention camps. This created shock waves within Germany. Not large waves, I grant you. But Germany's borders were not yet closed and word of mouth was free to travel.

Now let's jump to New York City. New York is a large cosmopolitan center and like all such centers with a diverse population they are sensitive to types of shock waves with unsettling vibrations that may not be 'felt' in the same manner as it would in a political capital such as Washington.

Asa Cohen was working for a New York group of Jewish anti-fascist intellectuals who were attuned to these shock-waves and strongly felt them. These people realized that danger signals were being unheeded in America. These people had studied Mein Kempf; they were exposed to the sordid soul of Nazilism. And when Clay ventured into their orbit, through Asa, he was exposed to that soul.

There is no doubt that Clay was being naive in his criticism of his friends at that juncture in time. His friends would not see the evil of Hitler until the war, and they would not see he evil soul of the Nazis until after the war when news of the gas chambers and the ovens was heard. Clay simply miscommuni-cated with his firends. But we all do that — we're human. Granted, it is hard to face the reality that even our closest friends don't feel as passinately about certain subjects as we do. (I like to think that after the incidents of that particular story Clay showed his friends the extracts from Mein Kempf that he had read and tried to make his buddies more politically (and morally) aware. Sadly, I can also imagine Clay's words to them still falling on deaf ears.)

Sorry, T.M., but I've got more history for you. Pre-1939 history.

In November 1936 Germany and Japan signed an anti-Comintern (communist) Pact. (Italy joined a year later.) This event was really a declaration of Fascism for all the world to see. and just a couple of months later, in January 1937, Hitler repudiated the 'war guilt' clause of the Versailles Treaty. Many historians point to this event as the true cause of the second World War. Hitler's actions made Germany an outlaw natior and certainly indicated to the world that Germany was going to put the money it was saving from its reparations to England and France back into revitalizing its war machine for the next conflict.

So, T.M. — you say that the closer to 1939 that the story took place the easier it would be for Clay to be prophetic. I have to respond by saying that even in 1935 — the time of the story in #5 — Clay was true to his time.

Dear Dave and Rick,

Wordsmith #5 was a sensitive portrayal of people's reactions to Naziism. I must also compliment you on the vignettes on Thunderbolt Bonner and The Freedom Fighter. They were enjoyable reading in themselves.

It's generally accepted that the tremendous comics boom of the '40's was also a reaction to Naziism, and that the current superhero comics are still riding on the inertia of that explosion. People needed escapist literature. The costumed heroes fought Naziism in a way that the soldier never could.

Many of the early writers and artists in comics were Jews — from **Eisner** to **Simon** and **Kirby** to **Siegal** and **Shuster**. Like you, I have wondered what they thought as the rumours came in about the imprisonment and extermination of their relatives in Europe. Your speculations are perceptive and convincing, showing a wide range of reaction. (It is interesting that the reaction to anti-Semitism in France in the 1870's by Impressionist painters is widely documented — but we may never know what pulp writers and cartoonists in America thought about the Nazis a scant fifty years ago.)

In Wordsmith #5 Eric Hassel sees the Aryan hero of the pulps as the super man. I have to wonder if Jerry Siegal saw the Jew of the late '30's as his Superman. Like the Jew of the thirties Superman comes from a world (Krypton, Europe) which is being destroyed. Though the parents can not leave (German emigration laws) they did manage to get their baby out while they awaited their deaths. The baby was adopted in the New World where he Anglicized his name (Kal-El to Clark Kent). He was told that he would walk among them but he would not be one of them. (Many Jews also feel apart from the Christian society. They can pass for a Christian if they so desire, but many take up two identities — that of 'assimilation-ists' when they are in the company of Christians and then their truer cultural identity when in the company of members of their religion.) And Kryptonite becomes a reminder of the 'old world' to the assimilationist Jew — it is a 'piece' of the old world, reminding them of their origins and sapping their will to survive. Lois Lane becomes the shiksa goddess. She looks good but she's untouchable because many Jews do not marry outside of their religion. The bottle city of Kandor is the shtetle, the old Jewish village where Superman (or the assimil-ationist Jew) can truly feel at home. Perry White is the rabbi. Luthor is Hitler. Brainiac is Eichman.

Sorry if I got carried away there, but this theory — which I first heard from a friend of mine named Paul Truster — was too interesting to just let go by without sharing it with you or your readers.

Ron Kasman, Toronto, Ontario

Sounds like a viable theory to me, Ron. Good food for thought, anyway. I know that one of our readers — who's a big Superman fan — will certainly get a kick out of it.

NEXT ISSUE

Wordsmith #9 features a story that has been requested by many readers since we began the series. Namely — to see one of Clay's pulp stories from beginning to end.

In tribute to the genre that was the back-bone of the pulps (Westerns) we'll be bringing you the story of 'the Cactus Express'. This yarn about a trouble-plagued stagecoach will find its way to the desk of a New York literary agent who's hunting for new talent to represent.

Clay's success as a pulpster has already cost him a girlfriend. Will there be another price to pay?

PULP PIN-UP

MIGHTY BIG PUBLISHING COMPANY
CRIME
SMASHERS
10¢
There is no escaping the wrath of the DOMINO DETECTIVE in THE GUILTY ARE DAMNED by B. EMERALD
PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER TWO
42nd STREET MASSACRE

BY **STEVE LEBLANC**

THE PULP FILE
by Don Hutchison

Man Of Tomorrow

Edmond Hamilton was born October 21, 1904 in Youngston, Ohio and was raised on a nearby farm. In his youth he witnessed horses rear up in buggy shafts at the sight of an automobile. In his mature years he was present when Apollo 12 departed on a tail of flame and thunder, outward bound for the moon.

Hamilton was one of the grand Old Masters of the science fiction pulps, one of a handful of future-think wordsmiths who, in order to eke out even a modest existence, were forced to write and sell reams of material to a small and relatively obscure market.

He was almost the perfect pulpster. His imaginative action-packed space operas just about jumped off the page with writer-to-reader urgency. He once recalled how, in putting the finishing touches to an epic space battle, he had become so excited that as he punched his typewriter the machine "walked" over the surface of his old flat-topped desk -- with the writer following it, banging away at it as he finished his climactic scene.

Such stuff wasn't meant to be great literature, but his readers caught the excitement. The Edmond Hamilton byline sold magazines.

As a full-time pulp writer Hamilton worked other fiction categories: mystery, detective, horror and straight ad-venture; but his eyes were on the stars and his heart belonged to space.

When he was young the term science fiction did not exist -- it had yet to be invented -- but the precocious farm lad devoured the scientific romances of **H.G. Wells** and **Jules Verne** and later snapped up copies of such pulps as **All-Story** and **Argosy** when they featured the fantastic serials of such pioneers as **Edgar Rice Burroughs** and **Ray Cummings.**

As Hamilton recalled it in a fan magazine essay published in 1934: "I have been a strong science fiction fan since 1916, when I started in with the old **Argosy** tales of Burroughs, **Julian Hawthorne** and others. I had a newspaper route about that time and when Merritt's long-awaited sequel to "The Moon Pool" came out, I carried papers one night each week with the **All-Story Magazine** held three inches before my eyes, avoiding automobiles and street-cars by the grace of God and heaving every paper on the wrong porch."

At an early age he determined to become a professional writer himself and devote his own life to entertaining people, as he had been entertained, with yarns of derring-do on far planets and wondrous worlds. At the time of that momentous decision he had no idea that science fiction was about to become a category in its own right and would eventually encompass scores of magazines specializing in just that sort of fiction.

When Edmond Hamilton's first pulp yarn appeared in the August 1926 issue of **Weird Tales,** science fiction magazines were just five-months old (**Amazing Stories,** April 1926 was the first). Hamilton's initial venture into sf, bearing the simplistic title "Across Space", was published only a month later. Within a short time he was routinely selling stories that took men out beyond the planets to the stars, then to other galaxies, and finally outside the known universe altogether.

As **Sam Moskowitz** pointed out in his book SEEKERS OF TOMORROW, Hamilton was probably one of the most underestimated (although certainly not unappreciated) writers of science fiction. Author of the **Captain Future** stories, Ed's adventure novels earned him the nickname "World-Saver" (or alternatively, "World-Wrecker") Hamilton, due to his penchant for smashing planets and stars around like so many billiard balls. Story titles such as "Crashing Suns" and "The Universe Wreckers" amply prove this. If characterization was weak in his early stories, Ed made up for it with his imaginative ideas and express-train narrative drive. Many of his concepts were innovative and were often "rediscovered" by other writers in later years.

Among the concepts pioneered by Hamilton was the theme of interstellar adventure itself; the notion of a galactic empire complete with its own law-and-order Interstellar Patrol; the Fortean concept of Earth as property; the evolution of plant life and the evolution of entire worlds; along with the concept of speeded-up evolution; the employment of absolute darkness as a weapon; the use of ancient mythology as a basis for sf; the idea of recruiting people from different time periods; aliens in metal bodies; creatures of flame; matter transmitters; and the introduction of floating cities; and animals with human intelligence. There were many, many others.

In that same 1934 fan article, Hamilton described his basic working methods: "I sometimes write down an interesting title and then work up a story from it...At other times a passage or note in a scientific work will suggest a story. I can do nothing with a yarn until I have the end of it in mind. Time of writing is widely variable -- I've done 10,000 word stories in two days, and then again I've worked on a so and so of the same length for four full months."

"I write a first draft and as I go along change the plot, characters, and settings to suit the developments. Then go over it and chop it up with pencil and make a final draft. Tried sending out first draft stuff a few years back, but found it contained too many slips and that I didn't have enough control over the development of the story."

"I get keenly interested in a science-fiction story once I've started it, and in fact, I can't imagine anyone writing this kind of fiction who isn't a bug on it... I think the chief value of science-fiction is not so much that it imparts scientific information as that it gives the reader an interest in science. It tends to make him think of science, not as something dry and repellent, but as something that is pregnant with many interesting and exciting possibilities for man's future."

As his career progressed, the old superscience melodramas gave way to more thoughtful stories in which depth of characterization and emotional drives became prominent. Hamilton proved he could write as sophisti-'cated a story as the next man and some of his short stories from this later period are small masterpieces.

THE PULP FILE

by Don Hutchison

Ironically, we seldom choose our own monument. In 1940 (at a time when a new and more mature kind of science fiction was about to be developed by men like **Heinlein, Asimov,** and **Sturgeon**) Edmond Hamilton was assigned the job of writing a series of booklength novels for a brand new pulp magazine: **Captain Future**. The new magazine was designed to carry the breathless adventures of a futuristic **Doc Savage**-type superhero, aimed mainly at teenagers.

Seventeen issues of **Captain Future, Man of Tomorrow,** were issued between 1940 and 1944, and fifteen of the novels were written by Hamilton. After the magazine folded due to war-time paper shortages three more Captain Future novels were published in **Startling Stories**, one of the publisher's companion magazines. In 1950 the character was revived once again for a series of seven novelets in **Startling Stories.** They were the final curtain call for Captain Future (Curtis Newton) and his three bizarre assistants, Grag the robot, Otho the android, and Simon Wright, the Brain -- a living human brain imprisoned forever within a transparent, indestructable case.

Captain Future was not Edmond Hamilton's own creation. Legend has it that he was given the assignment for the series while attending The First World Science Fiction Convention in New York City, July 2, 1939. **Leo Margulies,** editorial director for **Standard Magazines,** was also at the convention and had been impressed by the enthusiasm of the early science fiction fans. Margulies vowed on the spot to create a new pulp hero magazine aimed at younger readers in an effort to win them over to the new brand of future fiction. He reasoned that this innovation would do for science fiction what **The Shadow** had done for mystery and what Doc Savage had done for adventure.

Originally the new magazine was to be called **Mr. Future...Wizard of Science.** Hamilton was supplied a story and character outline by the publishers. In the publishers' outline Curt Newton was not just a man of heroic proportions but a biological mutant born of radioactive emanations, like some monster in a 1950's horror flick. Hamilton found the outline unusable and was forced to go to New York and argue with the publishers for days until the proposed set-up was changed to his liking. Eventually the character -- now called Captain Future -- emerged in a form acceptable to Hamilton, his publishers, and their suitably impressed young readers.

Hamilton called the first novel, "The Horror on Jupiter," but that title was changed to "Captain Future and the Space Emperor," as the editors decided that they should capitalize on the Captain Future name.

In that opening number Curt Newton was immediately set up as the hero of all the worlds. The reactions of mere mortals was nothing short of idolatrous. A strapping red-haired scientific adventurer, Captain Future was the past's future crime fighter, an implacable Nemesis of all oppressors and exploiters of the System's human and planetary races. Whenever a menace threatened to conquer, enslave, or destroy hapless Mankind, the President of Terra had but to send out a distress call to the good Captain's secret base on the moon (a kind of extended bat-signal) and Captain Future would zoom out, proton pistol blazing, to do battle with the wicked.

In one form or another, the Captain Future series ran for twelve years and almost a million words. Because of low pay and rushed deadlines Hamilton was forced to write most of the early books in first draft only. When he caught his breath he began to give them more care and an increasing amount of inventive vitality. Eventually he took the good Captain and his aides outside the Universe itself to the very birthplace of creation -- where Captain Future had to wrestle with the temptation of his own godhood. No pulp hero could go farther.

Few would claim that the saga of Captain Future represented the best of Edmond Hamilton's work. Despite his preference for action-oriented fiction, Hamilton was a mature and sensitive man. Of his 300 published works he is best remembered for such emotionally moving short story classics as "Requieum" and "He That Hath Wings," and a least one novel, "Star Kings," which appears to be an enduring favorite with readers of all generations. Most of his later novels ("City at World's End," "The Star of Life") are examples of science fiction at its adventuresome best.

All of the Captain Future novels were republished by Popular Library in the late 1960's. Hamilton received no royalties for the reprints but they did serve to introduce Captain Future to a new generation of fans. These books are still to be found in used book stores. They are worth collecting, not only for the Hamilton stories, but because three of the cover paintings are by Frank Frazetta, and another is by Jeff Jones. (The rest of the covers are pretty dreadful).

While the Captain Future novels were aimed at a younger audience than most science fiction magazines, the author's fecund imagination and zest for story telling insured that they were great fun to experience. As a result they have survived for nearly half a century and are still being read today. Who can say how many young readers were influenced by them and went on to help shape the very future they dreamed about? There are no statistics on such things.

A few years before his death in 1977 Ed Hamilton and his wife Leigh Brackett (a much-loved pulp author in her own right) were invited to sit in the reporters' press box at Cape Kennedy and they watched Apollo 12 take off for the moon. Ed later wrote about his reactions to the take-off:

"If anyone at that moment had asked me, 'Was it worthwhile to spend 44 years writing science fiction?' I would have unhesitatingly answered 'Yes'. For I feel we had a part ...a very tiny part... in this. We did not plan or build or launch this craft. We only dreamed about it. But perhaps the dreams helped a little to create a climate in which it **could** be planned and launched and built..."

"Without a single exception all of my oldest friends, and some of them go back forty years, are science fictionists. Many others who were friends are now gone. And as the rocket soared up into the clouds, I found myself thinking of them all... looking back to the days when we were all looking forward, when we met in tiny groups and tried to peer into the future, discussed it, argued about it, and attempted awkwardly to put it into fiction. And it did not seem to me, with that thunder still echoing in my ears, that what we did or tried to do was completely unworthy."

Who is to say where imagination ends and reality begins?

PULP PORTRAIT

DOC SAVAGE

ANTHONY VAN BRUGGEN and ALEXA LIEBREGTS '87